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ABSTRACT

The author discusses: (1) the development of a review of the literature on the nonverbal behavior of clients in a counseling situation; and (2) the development of a tape for use in a Counseling Theories class to demonstrate the importance of listening carefully for nonverbal counselee cues. The literature review is broken down into 4 main areas of nonverbal communication: (1) bodily cues; (2) facial expressions; (3) vocal cues; and (4) personal appearance. Excerpts from the tape, which includes interchanges with a wide variety of clients, are included. Limitations of the tape are acknowledged. In general, the report stresses that (1) the counselors can gain greater understanding of clients by attending to nonverbal cues; (2) the counselor cannot trust what he hears in words alone; and (3) the counselor must be aware of his own, as well as his counselee's nonverbal cues. (TL)

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Research Report

THE STUDY OF NON-VERBAL ACTION OF COUNSELEES

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Cooperative Research

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and the
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FINAL REPORT

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Stout State University
Menomonie, Wisconsin

July, 1969

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter — Page

I. Introductory Section 1

Summary

Introduction

Methods

II. Findings and Analysis 4

Results

III Conclusions and Recommendations 5

Conclusions

Recommendations

IV. Supplementary and Appendix Materials 7

References

Bibliography

V. Glossary 8

VI. Appendix 9

I. Introduction Section

Summary---The problem under study was to develop a review of literature on the nonverbal behavior presented by clients in a counseling situation. A separate, additional part of the report was to develop a tape which could be used in Counseling Theories (479-475) to demonstrate the importance for counselors to listen very carefully for nonverbal cues of the counselee. These nonverbal cues are vocal cues which are concerned with how the counselee says what he feels rather than taking what he says at face value. The tape is going to be used as an introductory teaching device for the first class meetings in Counseling Theories. The tape contains excerpts from nine actual counseling sessions; these counselees illustrated many good examples of vocal cues which can greatly alter the literal meaning of what was said.

The review of literature serves as an excellent "first source" for student counselors who have very little background knowledge of nonverbal behavior. Unfortunately, there is very little information available on nonverbal behavior for which the student counselor can make immediate use of. An important objective of this project was to summarize the main highlights on this topic for which student counselors could put to practical use in their course of training. The bibliography is relatively extensive, and it can be used as a reference source for those desiring to gain a broader background on nonverbal communication. Hopefully, this report will stimulate further reading on this rather unexplored topic. By reading this review of literature, it is desirable that the reader becomes more consciously aware of nonverbal cues of his clients.

The following three statements briefly summarize what is covered in the report:

1. Counselors can gain a greater understanding of the counselee's

problems by noting the nonverbal cues presented by him in the counseling situation.

2. The counselor can not trust what he hears in words alone.

3. The counselor must be aware of the nonverbal cues he presents to the counselee as well as the nonverbal cues he is supposed to watch for himself.

Introduction---The review of literature is broken down into four main areas of nonverbal communication - bodily cues, facial expressions, vocal cues, and personal appearance. There are no statistics of hypothesis to be proved or disproved in this report. The references seem to be in basic agreement about the many aspects of nonverbal communication. Whenever there is a conflict of opinion between authorities, the author has brought into view both sides of the issue. The review of literature serves as a good source for background reading on this topic. This project serves a unique purpose because there has not been a summary report available for student counselors on this topic before this time.

The tape can be used as a teaching device for only one area of nonverbal communication - vocal cues. However, the listener can learn the importance of carefully listening to how the client expresses his feelings. The tape serves not only in illustrating implied meanings of counselee's, but it also serves in evaluating how well the listener is able to interpret these implied meanings. An implied meaning is a term which illustrates that the manner in which a statement is said, can imply something entirely different than the literal meaning of the statement. The clients who are separately interviewed on the tape are from various walks of life; their ages and problems of concern are also diversified.

Methods---A wide variety of old and new literature had to be explored before an adequate review of literature was developed. Periodicals and unpublished documents and reports were reviewed as well as old and new books. Most of the references used were very new; however, there were a few old classic references which were of much value to me in presenting this report.

In preparation of the demonstrative tape, approximately thirty different tapes from actual counseling sessions were listened to and evaluated. Excerpts from the counseling sessions for this tape were dialogues which illustrate good examples of how a client may "say one thing and actually mean something else."

Since both the dialogues of the counselee and counselor were presented on these excerpts, it is possible for the students listening to the tape to evaluate the counselor's response to the client. The individual passages on the demonstrative tape were only long enought to give the listener a basic idea of what was happening in the counseling situation. Below each excerpt is a multiple-choice question which asks the listener to select the best response from what can be implied from the manner in which the client spoke. Only a very short period of time is available for the listener to decide upon a particular response for each of the ten excerpts. Nine out of ten counseling sessions or situations are of completely different counselors and counselees. A short period of time is left for the listener to answer each excerpt because in an actual counseling situation the counselor must be ready to give immediate interpretation of what the client was communicating.

II. Findings and Analysis

Results---A counselor cannot trust in words alone. Listening to the literal meaning of what a client says is only one of the various modes of communication. The counselor can improve his understanding of the client and improve his rapport with him by consciously noting his bodily action, facial expressions, vocal cues, and personal appearance. Many of our feelings and emotions are open to public view, but many people do not realize how much information they can gain about another person just by viewing his nonverbal behavior. Our feelings and emotions are under both voluntary and involuntary control. For example, when a person is angry he often will show these feelings in various outward actions.

The counselor must also be concerned with the nonverbal cues he presents to the client. For instance, if the counselor has poor eye contact, and he keeps himself at an unreasonable distance away from the client, he is going to create an image of aloofness.

The study of nonverbal behavior is becoming an ever widening field. Only in the recent decades has this topic been explored in a scientific light. There has not been a great deal of study done on this topic before this time due to the feeling that nonverbal behavior is such an abstract thing which cannot be measured and accurately interpreted.

The way a counselee expresses his feelings maybe more enlightening than the literal meaning of his statements. In order for a counselor to make an appropriate response to a client, he has to carefully listen to the client to find out what his true feelings are. This

judgement must be made very quickly, and it is therefore necessary to gain skill in quickly analyzing the implied meanings in the client's responses. Communication breakdown is not a question as to hearing what the client has said, but rather it is a question of understanding what the client is really trying to say.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions---The review of literature contains only the highlights concerning nonverbal behavior present in a counseling situation. It still, however, completes its purpose because it serves as an adequate source in background reading on nonverbal communication. The section on the report relating to vocal cues will be of particular benefit to the listener of the demonstrative tape. The multiple-choice test items on the correlating guide sheet to the tape, will aid the student counselor in discovering how much work he needs to do in becoming sensitive to the vocal cues or the implied meanings presented to him by his clients. This tape will also illustrate very clearly that what a person says, may not actually indicate what he truly feels.

Recommendations---Since the tape is composed of clients from various ages and walks of life, it is not particularly limited in use. However, it can only be used as a teaching device in one area of nonverbal communication--vocal cues. It would be most profitable to develop an audiovisual tape of actual portions from counseling situations. Such a project is now underway at Stout State University. Through this audiovisual tape the student counselors will be able to see all the various aspects of nonverbal communication at work.

Teachers as well as various other professional people can benefit more from their interactions with others through a better understanding

of nonverbal communication. In the future there is going to be much more of an emphasis on nonverbal communication.

IV. Supplementary and Appendix Materials

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V. Glossary

1. Counselee - A counselee has been defined as any individual who has been obtaining professional help in clarifying and solving personal, specialized, or perplexing problems.
2. Counselor - A counselor has been defined as a professionally trained individual in the guidance field who's main concern has been to help others in solving various types of individual problems.
3. Implied meaning - Implied meanings have been defined as the head or face which has involved such things as winking, shaking, nodding, smiling, and wrinkling the brows or forehead.

4. Nonverbal behavior - Nonverbal behavior has been defined as any silent, unspoken action, vocal cues, and personal appearance.
5. Verbal behavior - A verbal message has been defined as the literal meaning found in any verbal statement.
6. Vocal cues - Vocal cues have been defined as any vocal characteristics which have included such things as rate of speech, number of pauses, inflectional pattern, volume and vocal quality.

VI. Appendix

DIALOGUES FOR TAPE ON IMPLIED MEANINGS

Directions: The following passages are from actual counseling sessions. During the interval of time between each case, you are to select the most appropriate response. Nine out of the ten sessions are of completely different cases or situations.

1. Homemaker, Mother, and Teacher

Counselee: No, because I, well, some people if they're competitive within themselves they can do a much better job, but I feel that I flub more when I try to do a perfect job. Oh, this might come back from, might go to the idea of trying to be a perfectionist when I was younger, I always tried to be a perfectionist - right down to helping my mother clean up the house just so and keeping my room just so and maybe, maybe that's the idea; you try to be perfect but a person really can't, and I don't feel that a person really should try to be because there isn't anyone in this world who is perfect. At least that's my feeling.

Counselor: But perfection then seems to be, ah, on your mind, and it seems to be a goal of yours, is that it?

Counselee: Yeah, I think so. Even now person---it---try to keep perfectly clean house and try to cook perfectly and things like this, and it's really impossible to do everything. And I think I have always felt a little inadequate because I don't think there is anything I really have excelled in, in any certain area. I just feel I'm kinda mediocre in everything and I think deep down I have had this feeling of trying to be perfect in something, anyway, some certain area that I could excel in.

Counselor: You have, ah, no area that you feel you have excelled in?

Counselee: No, I don't think so.

Counselor: How, ah, how do you feel about your profession? Have you excelled in that?

Counselee: Oh, I feel that I, that I have done more than an adequate job, but I don't feel that I have really excelled in it in any which way. I feel that I have done a much better job than probably a lot of people do.

Counselor: Uh huh.

A. Any good wife should keep a clean house and cook well.

B. I don't feel I have any talent that stands out.

C. It's disappointing to be average in everything you do.

D. Some people just strive to be perfectionists.

E. I have a better feeling inside myself when I try to do something better than the average person.

2. Eleven-Year-Old Boy

Counselee: Like some time, Clark and I were sitting in the sandbox, Virginia came over with her friends and then all of a

sudden she just got mad at me and for some reason she started throwing sand at me. There was this little three-year-old. And she started throwing rocks at me and I don't know what I am supposed to do cause if I beat.....beat him up I don't know what I'll do.

Counselor: Uh huh

Counselee: So the only thing I can do is get black and blue and then my parents won't believe me cause he threw a rock and almost broke....broke my furniture and glasses. I keep them back and my parents didn't believe me. So the only thing I can do is come back half blind or have a broken skull and they might even believe me if I'm lucky.

A. My parents are quite understanding.

B. My parents do not trust me.

C. My feelings are hurt and I don't know what to do.

D. My parents don't accept things the way they really are.

E. I am mad at my parents, and I don't care what my parents say.

3. Recent Male High School Graduate

Counselee: Yes, but, isn't education stressed a little bit too much?

Counselor: In what way?

Counselee: I don't know, but from, from what I have heard education is just stressed too much. I mean college education, and everyone is not going to get one, and everyone who does, they have a better chance but....

Counselor: Well, the thing about a college education, ah, it's not going to guarantee you a job, and it's not going to guarantee you ah, ah more money. In fact, a person in a

plant is going, can can probably earn much more money than a person, ah, teaching, teaching school. But ah, yet with a college education or let us say with a person teaching school, the working conditions are much better. This is a thing you have to look at here too. Ah, you mean, will you be satisfied, ah to stay and work on an assembly line or work on a machine all your life or would you like to try and make the same money or possibly better money and do less work? It's, it's just what you want. Some people are just perfectly satisfied to go work at plants all their life. Some people aren't.

Counselee: Then isn't the idea of having to have to, well, put up with another four years of schooling, then.

Counselor: Well if you're the type of person who doesn't like school, well, then you (laughs) just can't stand it, I doubt very seriously if you're going to like college.

A. I'm not convinced college is for me because I don't think I could put up with four more years of that stuff.

B. I know I would really be better off going to college because people with college ed..ati s probably end up with nicer jobs.

C. I will be a real failure if I don't go to college.

D. Yes, I can see where I better go to college because I can get a nicer job and maybe make more money.

E. I don't think college is for everybody although it is for most people.

4. Freshman College Co-Ed

Counselee: But one thing else I asked him, I asked him, "Art, from what you have said, I take it that you believe in pre-marital intercourse." And he said, "Well, I have never thought about it." And then he asked me if I did, and then I said, "No." And then he asked me if I was a virgin, and I said, "Yes." And then he just looked at me so funny. And I don't know if I give the impression to people that I am just some kind of a slut that, that goes around because sometimes the way I talk and act. But that's just the way I am, and if they don't like it, they can just lump it. But I try to be a clean-cut kid and just because I have a dirty mind doesn't mean that I'm dirty all the way through. But when I get married I want to wear a white dress, and I would feel very self-conscious if I wore a white dress and wasn't a virgin because I feel that white is a pure color and you should be pure when you walk down there too, accept body and soul of your husband. And this is why I feel very strongly about this, and this is why I believe the way I do....

A. Dating and moral codes at colleges really don't bother me.

B. I felt hurt when I was not thought to be a virgin because deep down inside I want to stay a virgin until marriage.

C. Just because I sometimes say some dirty things, does not mean that I'm not a virgin.

D. I have done a lot of thinking about boys and about getting married someday.

E. I don't truly care what the boys I go with think of me.

5. Freshman College Co-Ed

Counselee: And I lost weight and I can just imagine what he he going to say about that. But, I'm just going to tell him I met a guy, and when you fall in love you don't eat. And I fell in love, and he will probably think it's stupid and boy does she need to go see the psychiatrist and stuff. But he can just talk all he wants because I have talked to my dad about it, and he thinks that it's unnecessary for me to go see a psychiatrist. For one thing, it costs too much and for another thing there isn't a big need. And so, but that's the way things are, and everything is wonderful....

A. It is not silly for me to be in love even if other people do think it is.

B. The only reason I am acting a little different is because I am in love.

C. I am sure I will keep falling in and out of love.

D. I do not think it would help talking to anyone about my love for my boyfriend.

E. People may think I am nuts and need real help, and sadly enough they maybe right.

6. Forty-two-year-old Alcoholic

Counselee: When I started tending bar, ah, the first few years were pretty good, but then I tried to take on more than ah, more than I should have. Like I think I mentioned too, the other time, that I was trying to hold two jobs, remember?

Counselor: Ya, you did mention that.

Counselee: I was trying to hold two places, and I was putting in a lot of hours and ah, so in order to keep going a lot of times, I'd ah drink a little bit and that would keep me goin' and ah, I think that's where the trouble actually started. And when you start taking drinks too, too push yourself, well then you're going to run into trouble. Ya, that's about in fifty, fifty-eight, fifty-nine.

Counselor: Ya

Counselee: I knew I was in trouble.

Counselor: Ya

Counselee: As far as the drinking was concerned. And I'm quite sure everyone else knew it too, ah, as far as my family was concerned. But then after you come fer that, that length of time, and you have drank everyday it's, it's you don't just shut that off like a water facet.

Counselor: Ya, it's kind of hard to make an about face and turn if off.

Counselee: You, you have got to change your whole environment. You can't, ah, you can't shut off the water facet, and stay and keep on living down there, ah, keep the same environment and shut off, ah, the drinkin' and it would be pretty hard to do, wouldn't it.

Counselor: Ya, that would be hard.

Counselee: Friends all around you that ah, all the time. Why, ah, fifty-nine about I figured that ah, I knew, I knew the end was going to come then, but I would just keep putting it off for another day. When your sick the next day,

it's about the only thing that would make you well. What made you sick will make you well again so you start all over. And that's just like, that's ah, well like a chain reaction and no end to it!

Counselor: A continuous cycle.

Counselee: Ya, a continuous cycle. So when the end does come, ah...

A. I have a serious drinking problem and I have known it for a long time.

B. I understand my drinking problem but I find it impossible to do anything about it.

C. I'm not going to let this drinking problem get me down.

D. I have done a lot of thinking about my drinking problem.

E. My drinking problem will no longer be a problem.

7. Sixteen-Year-Old Boy

Counselor: You feel then Lee, that your father is not accepting you for....for what you are

Counselee: No, I don't think he is and I think that he's kinda dissatisfied and...I mean...it's not...it's just that... uh... like I work with him there at the restaurant there, and people come in and they'll talk to him and they say, "Oh, is this your son?", and he'll say "Yeah, but don't tell anyone.", or things like that...you don't know when he is kidding and when he isn't. That kinda puzzles you. It bother me sometimes. But I don't say anything I just slough it off...or forget about it or try.

Counselor: Those remarks do bother you, don't they Lee?

Counselee: Yeah...but I try not to show it. I mean, inside they do. I think about them after they... after he says them but there's no outside display of dislike...or dislike...or contempt or anything like that...I just try to laugh or keep working.

Counselor: Uh huh.

A. I know exactly how my father feels about me because he clearly tells me thru his remarks.

B. I am able to slough off my fathers remarks about me without it bothering me.

C. I do not really know for sure how my father feels about me but I feel he is somehow disappointed in me.

D. My father really cares for me a great deal, but he is always trying hard not to show it.

E. I guess no boy can expect his father not to do a lot of kidding around.

S. Junior High Boy

Counselor: Do you still get as angry as quick as you used to?

Counselee: Well, that all depends. Well (chuckles), it all depends on what there is to get angry about...

Counselor: I guess that's a pretty good answer. What would you say though overall, in general, are you learning to live with your temper, or is it still pretty bad.

Counselee: Fifty-fifty.

Counselor: You're not sure, huh.

Counselee: Well, sometimes I can control it pretty good, but sometimes I, ah, fly off the handle. Something else went bad in school or something and I get home I argue and I'd get mad at my sister, and my ma, and my dad. My dad always

says I'm hollaring! I don't hollar that much (pause). Ah, it works out pretty good even though, even though...I have good days at school, and ah, I don't have good days at school.

Counselor: All days are bad?

Counselee: Ah, every teacher is against me! I go to the library, and I get kicked out.

Counselor: Why?

Counselee: Cause somebody is talking to me. Stump! (librarian) She thinks that, that as if she owns the school and the library just cause she works there (pause). What really gets me mad, I went from two o'clock until four-thirty sitting in the office, there cause she put me there. For what? Because I was sitting in my chair, like this just looking around...

A. I have trouble controlling my temper and getting along with people.

B. I don't really feel I should worry about controlling my feelings.

C. I really must try harder to get along with everyone.

D. I can't seem to hold my feelings inside as most people think I should.

E. Maybe I should control my temper better, but it is hard with stupid people pick on me for nothing.

9. Female Special Education Student at High School Level

Counselor: Does your mother (clears throat) or your grandmother ever let you cook?

Counselee: Some of the times.

Counselor: What do you like to cook?

Counselee: I don't know.

Counselee: Oh, one Sunday I was by myself and the---was all alone. Mom, mom and ah my mother and grandma was down to Erickson's. And I started to put bacon in a pan, and I turned on the over, and I baked my own bacon, and I made my own sandwich, and it was about that thick! Two pieces of toast on it, and it was really good.

Counselor: You like bacon then.

Counselee: Uh huh.

A. I've never had any luck cooking.

B. I don't have a lot of chances to cook at home.

C. I really felt good, I made that sandwich all by myself.

D. I liked making that sandwich, but all my cooking experiences haven't been successful.

E. Cooking is fun for me all the time.

10. Senior High Girl

Counselor: Mother talks to you a lot?

Counselee: She doesn't...they really don't know much about me, really, they, I don't know, I really don't talk to either one of them...I keep it inside, and then I don't let it bother me that much. I don't know; they really don't know that much about me. They don't know what I do a lot. Cause, well, as I said before, sometimes I lie to them as to where I'm going. And that's not right either, but I don't know what to do. I mean, I want to go to these places, and I don't like to sit home.

A. I can't communicate with my parents.

B. If I could communicate better with my parents, I'd feel more confortable with myself.

C. I wish my parents understood my feelings better.

D. I don't care at all about what my parent's expect of me.

ANSWERS TO COUNSELING TAPES

Case Number	Most Suitable Answer
1	E
2	C
3	A
4	B
5	E
6	B
7	C
8	A
9	C
10	B